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INFO RUEHAC/AMEMBASSY ASUNCION 8556  
RUEHBO/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA 5915  
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 9879  
RUEHB/AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES 7099  
RUEHC/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 4147  
RUEHGE/AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN 0901  
RUEHPE/AMEMBASSY LIMA 4475  
RUEHMD/AMEMBASSY MADRID 4315  
RUEHM/AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO 5959  
RUEHPO/AMEMBASSY PARAMARIBO 0557  
RUEHQ/AMEMBASSY QUITO 6764  
RUEHSG/AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO 1539  
RHEHN/NSC WASHINGTON DC  
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TAGS: PGOV PREL SNAR BL

SUBJECT: BOLIVIA: WARNING NEW FRIENDS AND OFFENDING THE OLD

Classified By: Acting EcoPol Chief Brian Quigley for reasons 1.4 b,d

¶1. (SBU) With a phrase oft-repeated in the last two weeks, President Evo Morales confirmed that "if anyone wants the DEA to return, well first they have to end the government of Evo Morales," adding, "there can't be an armed uniformed group managing the armed forces and the police like the DEA used to do." At the same presentation, given to officials from the armed forces and the police, Morales asked the assembly to "help me organize a national office of intelligence, an organization of the state itself with its own armed forces and its own police." Morales described this to-be-formed organization as "an organism of national intelligence, in the service of the people and not in the service of foreign powers," Morales thanked an ex-commander of the family name Moreira who, according to Morales, was the one who requested the expulsion of DEA: "That is the army, its commanders thought of the dignity of the Bolivians and if in fact there was this type of foreign presence, it's not the fault of the people but rather the fault of the politicians who never thought of Bolivia nor of its dignification."

¶2. (SBU) Meanwhile, Government Minister Alfredo Rada gave an interview in which he said that he was confident that president-elect Barack Obama would maintain counternarcotics cooperation, but added that president-elect Obama would need to respect Bolivia's sovereignty. Rada claimed that the government of President George W. Bush used the fight against narcotrafficking for political and "colonizing" ends which expressed themselves in Bolivia in "destabilizing actions" on the part of the DEA. Rada advised that U.S. counternarcotics aid must be "oriented clearly to the anti-drug fight and not diverted to other things. It must respect sovereign decisions." Rada expressed a wait-and-see attitude regarding the new administration, saying, "We have confidence in the next administration and we'll wait until the new president assumes his duties, to see if the hopes translate into realities." Rada was clear on Bolivia's expectations from the USG, saying that Bolivia does not only expect more collaboration from Washington, "we demand it."

¶3. (C) Comment: Within Morales' cabinet and inner circle there are still high expectations for the incoming Obama

administration. Morales himself has predicted improved relations based on party similarities (more in terms of the mutual slogans of "change" and the Movement Toward Socialism and Democrat colors of blue than any real ideological similarities between the U.S. Democratic party and Morales's socialist MAS party.) Meanwhile, relations with closer neighbors are occasionally strained, as UNASUR seems unwilling to take over funding the DEA's counternarcotics efforts despite Evo's confident predictions. End comment.

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